IMPRIMATUR.

Ex Ædibus Lamb.
Junii 2. 1686.

Jo. Battely RR^mo Patri ac D^no D^no *Wilhelmo* Archiep. *Cantuar.* a Sacris Domesticis.

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4

A SERMON

Preached at

Bury St. Edmonds

Before the Right Reverend Father in God

WILLIAM

Lord Biſhop of *NORWICH*

At the Third Seſſion of His LORDSHIP's

Primary Viſitation

Holden there on *Wedneſday May* 5th. 1668.

By *MICHAEL BATT* M. A. Preacher at St. *James*'s in St. *Edmond*'s *Bury*.

Καλοὺς μαθητὰς ἐὰν φιλῇς, χάρις σοι οὐκ ἔστιν.
Μᾶλλον τοὺς λοιμοτέρους ἐν πραΰτητι ὑπότασσε.
Οὐ πᾶν τραῦμα τῇ αὐτῇ ἐμπλάστρῳ θεραπεύεται.
S. *Ignat.* ad *Polycarpum*.

LONDON, Printed for *William Oliver*, Bookſeller in *Norwich*: and to be ſold by *B. Aylmer* in *London*. 1686.

XUM

TO

The Right Reverend Father in God

WILLIAM

Lord Biſhop of *NORWICH.*

My LORD,

IN Obedience to your Lordſhip I have here taken the Confidence to preſent a very mean, and imperfect Diſcourſe to the View of a moſt Critical, *and* Diſcerning *Age. And yet might I be allow'd to* plead *the* Haſtineſs of its Compoſure, *without being thought to urge a Crime in excuſe of a Crime, and to defend One fault by Another; poſſibly it would need no other Apology. But if that may not be inſiſted on, I have only this Favour to requeſt of the World, that they would believe the Author to have as mean an Opinion of theſe* Sudden Thoughts, *as They can have, and that They would look upon them only as an inſtance of the incomparable Candor of Your Lordſhip; In pure compliance with whoſe Pleaſure it is, that they are thus made*

publick. *And ſince they* are ſo, *may it pleaſe that God, who can work His ends by very ſmall, and contemptible (for He has oft times done it without* any) Means, *to bleſs them for ſome* Good *to thoſe who have not yet learn'd duly to* revere *their Spiritual and Eccleſiaſtical* Superiors.

And may the ſame God long continue your Lordſhip A Bleſſing to his Church, An Ornament to this See, and an Eminent Example of Virtue to All that know You. In which Prayer, *I am perſwaded, there is not a Perſon in Your whole Dioceſe, that Fears God, Honors the King, or Bears any Affection to the Eſtabliſh'd Religion, but will heartily concur with,*

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt Dutifull Son,

and moſt humbly devoted Servant,

MICHAEL BATT.

A SERMON

Preached at

Bury St. Edmond's

Before the Right Reverend Father in God

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AT

The Third Seſſion of His Lordſhip's Primary Viſitation holden there on *Wedneſday May* 5th. 1686.

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1 CORINTH. 4. 21.

What will ye? ſhall I come unto you with a Rod, or in Love, and in the Spirit of Meekneſs?

NO ſooner had St. *Paul* planted a Church at *Corinth*, (and that with a great deal of *care* and *pains*, continuing there *a year and ſix months teaching the Word of God among them*, as St. *Luke* gives us

us the Relation of it, *Acts.* 18.) but by the *Craft* and *Envy*, the *Cunning* and *Malice* of the *Devil*, there were the most notorious *Disorders* crept in, and the most scandalous *Abuses* and *Corruptions* introduc't *into* it. In particular, there were a *sort* of *false* and *Heretical Teachers* started up among *Them*, who by the Charms of *Popular Eloquence*, and the little Arts of *Rhetorick*, (for They had nothing else to trust to) making advantage of their *Weakness*, had so insinuated themselves into their *Affections*, that there was no longer *place* for the *Apostle there*; these *New Instructors* had got their *Hearts*, even to the *Exclusion* of their *Father* himself, who in
Ver. 15. *Christ Jesus had begotten them through the Gospel.*

An *early Stratagem* of the grand Enemy of Mankind was *this*, and so successfull He found it for the creating *Variances*, and *Divisions* among the *Professors* of *Christianity*, that He has been encourag'd to make use of the *same*, for the infesting, and disturbing *these latter Ages of the Church* too.

And *we* for our parts have had, I'm sure, the wofull *Experience* of it, that whilst some have

have cried up *this Holy Man*, others magnified *that Godly Teacher*, in *oppoſition* to the *Orthodox eſtabliſh'd Miniſtry*; whilſt People have forſaken, and exchang'd the *publickly* allowed *form of ſound and wholeſome words* for the *Religious Cant* of *Private* Corners, the *Devil's* ends have been moſt *effectually ſerv'd* among us; *Piety* has *decay'd* and *iniquity abounded*, *Charity* has waxen *cold*, and *ſtrifes* and *emulations* grown *fierce* and *hot*, to the infinite detriment, and damage of *Religion*, and of the beſt conſtituted *Church* in the *Chriſtian* World.

But I forbear inlarging *here*, and return to the *Corinthians*, among *whom* (beſides divers *other* groſs miſcarriages) *this* that hath been mention'd having, in the *Apoſtles abſence*, got in, *viz.* (their *ſiding, and dividing into Parties* about *their Teachers*, ſome having *this Man's* perſon in admiration, others *that*) St. *Paul* that he might obviate the further miſchief, that might otherwiſe from hence ariſe, though he was detain'd at *that time* by ſome other neceſſary Service of the *Church* from a *Perſonal Viſitation*, *writes* them his mind in *this Epiſtle*. In *which*, after having

premis'd his *Salutations* of them, and *Thanksgivings* to God for them, the *first* thing he falls upon is the regulating *that* diſorder. And to that end, he decries, and expoſes that *Carnal Wiſedom* they were ſo mightily in love with, gives the *reaſons* of *his own* not affecting thoſe *lofty ſtrains*, for *which others* were had in ſuch eſteem by them, and vindicates his *plain*, and *familiar* manner of Preaching whilſt among them; which indeed is the *main drift* of the *four* firſt Chapters of the Epiſtle.

But leſt *this method* ſhould prove *ineffectual*, (as *writing* at a diſtance is not, for the moſt part, ſo moving as *conferring* and *diſcourſing* Face to Face) he ſends *Timotheus* unto them, *his beloved Son, and faithfull in the Lord*, as it is *v.* 17. of this Chapter, to *excite* and *perſwade* them to their *duty*, *by bringing them into remembrance of his ways which were in Chriſt*, both what he had formerly taught whilſt among *them*, and what he did yet continue to *teach in every Church*. And *this* indeed lookt like a very *hopefull expedient*, and was ſuch a courſe, as the *Apoſtle* might *reaſonably* promiſe himſelf *ſucceſs* from.

Not

Not but that He had ſtill *One Reſerve* more in caſe of a failure *here* too, and *that* was *The coming among them once again in His own perſon*, which was a *Certain way* if not by *fair* means by *foul*, I mean, if not by *love* and *gentleneſs*, by *fear* and *ſeverity* to reform, and rectify *all Abuſes*, not only *that* hitherto complain'd of, but likewiſe their *toleration of Inceſt*, their *litigious Law-Suits* (and that) *before Infidel-Judges*, their *Prophanation of the Sacred elements in the Lord's Supper*, and the *other diſorders and Miſdemeanors* reckon'd up in the Sequel of *this Epiſtle*.

He reſolves, I ſay, in caſe all other Expedients *fail*, once again to come among them *in perſon*, (declaring 1 Cor. 4. 19. that nothing but *God Almighty* ſhould hinder Him) and *then* take a ſure, and effectual Courſe of redreſſing *All* that was *amiſs*.

And, to ſpeak the Truth, He had great reaſon to ſuſpect before-hand that the forementioned *Means would* prove *inſufficient*, that let Him *write*, or *ſend what*, or *whom ſoever* He pleas'd, the Height and Haughtineſs of ſome was *ſuch*, as would not be curb'd, nor taken down thereby.

Nay and which was *more*, (and which call'd upon Him to make the more *haſt* to them) it ſhould ſeem that His *Abſence* had already caus'd them to entertain *low*, and *contemptuous* thoughts of *Him* too; For ſo does the Learned *Hammond* paraphraſe the 18th. *ver. Now ſome are puff'd up as though I would not come to you*, ὡς μὴ ἐλευσόμενος, "Be-
"cauſe I come not to you my ſelf perſonal-
"ly, ſome among you have taken occaſion
"to *deſpiſe* me that am abſent.

And hence it is that *He reſolves* ver. 19. *I will come to you ſhortly if the Lord will, and will know not the ſpeech of them that are puffed up but the Power.* That is, I'le make *trial* of thoſe confident boaſters, not of their *plauſible words*, and *fine talk*, (at which, I know, they are *excellent*;) but of their *ſolid worth*, and the *real good* they do with all their *oſtentatious braggings*. *For the Kingdom of God is not in word but in power*, ver. 20. *Chriſtianity* does not conſiſt in *ſpeaking*, but *doing*, not in *vaunting*, but *performing* great Things.

And hereupon follow the words of the Text.

What

What will ye? shall I come unto you with a Rod, or in Love, and in the Spirit of Meekneſs? Which the now-mentioned *Hammond thus* introduces, and explains.

" And now I talk of coming to you, I
" pray conſider, which will you chuſe? As
" you behave your ſelves, ſo at my coming
" will I exerciſe either my Power of inflic-
" ting puniſhments, or the milder way of
" kindneſs toward you; and therefore ac-
" cording as ye like beſt, ſo prepare your
" ſelves for my coming.

In the words of another *Paraphraſt*, a Re- Biſh. Hall.
verend Prelate of our *Church*, and ſometime of *this Dioceſe*.

" Let it be your own choice, after what
" manner I ſhall come unto You; My car-
" riage muſt be directed by your deſerts
" and diſpoſitions; Will you that I ſhall
" come to You with a Rod of Cenſure to
" correct your *Exorbitances*? or in Love,
" and in the Spirit of Meekneſs, to com-
" mend and cheriſh your *Holy Proceedings*,
" and *Chriſtian Carriage*? I ſhall do either
" of them, as I ſhall receive occaſion from
" You.

Thus,

Thus you ſee the *Occaſion*, and *Connexion* of the Words, in diſcourſing on which, I ſhall endeavour to do theſe *four* Things.

1. *To explain the Power the Apoſtle intimates Himſelf to have in the Church, in theſe words, ſhall I come unto you with a Rod?*

2. *To ſhew how far, or in what meaſures and degrees that Power is continued to the Biſhops, and Governors of the Church now.*

3. *To take notice how loth and unwilling the Apoſtle was to exerciſe this Power of His but in caſe of abſolute Neceſſity; And how deſirous He was, (as appears from the manner of His expreſſions) that He might have occaſion to uſe only the fair, and gentle Methods.*

4. *To exhort Chriſtians to be more obedient to their Spiritual* Paſtors *and* Fathers, *by an orderly and regular Converſation, than to force Them to the Uſe of that Severity, which They are otherwiſe averſe from.* In ſpeaking to which Particulars, I hope, I ſhall do (in ſome meaſure) *Right* to the *Text*, and no improper or unſuitable *Service* to *this Solemnity.*

1. *Firſt, for the Power the Apoſtle intimates Himſelf to have in the Church, in theſe words, ſhall I come unto you with a Rod?* Our

Our Blessed Saviour after he had publish'd His most excellent, and Heavenly Doctrine to the World, and lived here a considerable time an *Example* of the Practicableness of it, and had by divers unquestionable *miracles*, and at last by His *Death*, and *Resurrection* abundantly confirm'd the Truth of it; in fine, after having *finish'd the Work* that was here given Him to do, being to *return* again to the Bosom of His Father, He could not any longer manage in *His own Person* the Interests and Concerns of *His Church*. But still being touch'd with an infinite *Pity*, and *Compassion* for it, and well knowing to what *hazards* its *infancy*, and *tenderness* would expose it, left it not, till He had constituted, and appointed divers *Orders* and *Officers* in it, to whom He committed the *Care*, and whom He invested with *Power* sufficient to administer, from time to time, to all the *Exigencies*, and *Necessities* of it.

The precepts of *His Religion* were not like the later Impostures of *Mahomet* calculated on purpose for the gratification of Mens *lusts*, and for humoring the *looseness* and *wantonness* of the World.

No,

No, they were quite of *another nature*, and as *oppoſite* to *thoſe*, as *Light* to *Darkneſs*; requiring *mortification*, and *ſelf-denyal*, and enjoyning Men to *Crucify* their carnal Appetites, and Affections. And was it likely that ſuch an *Inſtitution* as *this* ſhould readily gain *footing* and *Countenance* in the World? or rather, was it not ſure to meet with the utmoſt *hatred*, and *oppoſition* imaginable?

Moſt certainly *our Saviour* plainly foreſaw it *was*, and *therefore* took Care before His departure to ſettle certain Perſons, *viz.* His *eleven Apoſtles*, (whom He had before ſelected for that Purpoſe) as His immediate Deputies, and Vicegerents, giving them in charge to *feed His flock*, to watch over, and provide for *His Church* at preſent *themſelves*; and empowering them, as Occaſion ſhould require, to depute, and Ordain *others* for the ſame ſervice *afterwards*; giving *them*, in ſhort, the ſame *commiſſion* to execute that *He* received of His Father, at His coming into the World, according as we read, *Joh.* 20. 21. *As my Father ſent me, even ſo ſend I you.*

Now

Now as for our Saviour's *Miſſion*; it will be ſufficient for my preſent purpoſe, if I give you only St. *Peter's* account of it, *Acts.* 10. 38. where in His Sermon to *Cornelius*, and his *Company*, He tells them, *That God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy* Ghoſt, *and with* Power. And *accordingly* were *His Apoſtles breath'd on* by *Him*, in order to their inſtallment to a *Succeſſion* in His *Office*, and had the ſame *Spirit*, and *Power* aſſured to *Them*; Which, *not many days* after His Aſcent, they likewiſe *receiv'd*, and were *thereby* enabled both to *gather*, and *govern* the *Church*; effectually to eſtabliſh *Chriſtianity*; and to propagate the *Doctrine of the Goſpel both in Jeruſalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermoſt parts of the earth*, as it is, *Acts.* 1. 8.

Though they were deſtitute of all *Secular Helps*, and had no *worldly Advantages* to aſſiſt or further them, and yet were to encounter with Mens *riveted opinions*, *ancient cuſtoms*, and *inveterate habits*; to beat them off from thoſe Practices, and Courſes they had been *uſed to* ever ſince they were born; and to impoſe upon them a *new*, and quite

 contrary

contrary way of life; reducing them from the ſmooth, and delightfull paths of *Sin* into the more rugged, and tireſom tracks of *Virtue*, yet, ſo effectually were they *endued with power from on high*, as St. *Luke* expreſſes
Ch. 24. 49. it, that by *their means*, the *Chriſtian* Faith was in a ſhort time *wonderfully diſſeminated*, and *diffus'd*. Like *lightning*, to borrow our Saviour's alluſion in another caſe, it came
Matt. 24. 27. from *the Eaſt, and ſhone even to the Weſt*, and
Acts. 19. 20. *the word of God grew mightily, and prevail'd*, the *Lord working* with them that publiſh'd it,
Mar. 16. 20. and *confirming it with ſigns following*; *God*
Heb. 2. 4. *alſo bearing them witneſs*, as it is in another place, *both with ſigns, and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.*

And by *this means* it was that though
Acts. 3. 6. *They had no ſilver and gold*, they became capable of exerciſing the moſt *uſefull*, and *beneficial Charity*; though they were not in a condition to relieve the poor Cripple with the *ſmall Alms* he beg'd, yet They help'd him to what was much better, *the uſe of his limbs*, which till that time he had never en-
v. 2. joy'd, having been *lame from his Mother's Womb*. By which *ſingle* Good Act, and *notable*

table Miracle alone, as it is ſtyled, *Acts.* 4. 16. They greatly *ingratiated* both *themſelves* and their *Doctrine* too, thereby proſelyting a vaſt multitude of their Auditors to the *Chriſtian Religion*, even to the number of *five thouſand* Men, *v.* 4.

Again, though They could not pleaſure [illegible] with *money* wherewith to repair to a *Phyſician*; yet, which was much more *acceptable*, as well as *ſurprizing*, at a *word* of their mouth, or a *touch* of their hand, was *Health* many times *reſtor'd*. Nay at their very *Shadow* were Diſtempers, and unclean Spirits *ſcar'd*, and *put to flight*, and the poor *Patients* were no longer *vext*, and *tormented* with them.

Even the moſt *obſtinate diſeaſes*, and *ſtubborn maladies* that had long time been *Medicorum ludibrium*, the *Scorn* and *Reproach* of the *Men of Skill*, and had baffled all the Rules of their *Art*, immediately gave place, and vaniſh'd at *their command*; So *large* was their Commiſſion, and in ſuch *general* terms did it run, as to empower them *to heal all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſe.* Matt. 10. 1.

I ſhall not inſtance to you, as I might eaſily do, in any of the *other* unwonted gifts,

and extraordinary abilities, which the *Apoſtles* were veſted with, (as *Propheſying*, *Speaking with tongues*, *Diſcerning of Spirits*, and *Interpretation of Tongues*) for the better fitting, and qualifying them for that eminent work, and employ to which they were *delegated*; and which render'd them ſo wonderfully helpfull, and beneficial to the world.

But, in reference to what I have *already* ſaid, t'was impoſſible but their *doing ſo much good*, in that *particular reſpect* now-mentioned, ſhould create in the minds of Men a very high veneration both for *themſelves*, and the *doctrine which they taught*. Whereas *otherwiſe*, we may conclude, there would have been but little regard paid either to the *One*, or the *Other*; but their *Perſons* would have been *ſcorn'd* and *contemn'd*, as being ſo very *mean*, and *deſpicable*; and the *Goſpel they preach'd* been *diſown'd*, and *rejected*, as being ſo *oppoſite* to the *looſe* and *irreligious tempers* of their Hearers.

How infinitely *wiſe* therefore, as well as *kind* and *carefull* did it ſpeak the *Author* of our *Religion*, to ſend forth the *firſt* Planters, and Spreaders of it, ſo *throughly*, and *compleatly* furniſhed for their Work? Though

Though they wanted the benefit of *letters*, *Inſpiration* enabled them to put to ſilence their moſt *learned Gainſayers*; Though their *ſpeech* (if we take the meaſures of it from *Man's Wiſedom*) was but *rude* and *unpoliſh't*, yet was it *in Demonſtration of the Spirit, and of Power*; though they were *poor*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, yet were they in condition of making many *rich*, and that with the moſt true and valuable *riches*; Laſtly, Though in *appearance* they had *nothing*, yet *really* they *poſſeſſed* All Things; All that I have hitherto mention'd being but *Part* of that Power, that was given them of *God*, for the greater Benefit, and Edification of His *Church*. 1 Cor. 2 4 2 Cor. 6 10.

In *particular*, and to come home to the *Text*; for the enabling them the better to diſcharge *the Office* that was laid upon them, there was committed to them *the Power of the Rod*, or of inflicting the ſevereſt of *corporal puniſhments* on groſs, and notorious *Offenders*; of their *doing which* we want not *inſtances* in that account St. *Luke* gives us of *the Acts of the Apoſtles*, *where* we read of *Elymas* the Sorcerer ſmitten with *Blindneſs* Acts 13. 11. ch. 5. 5. 10.

by

by St. *Paul*; and of *Ananias* and *Sapphira* ſtruck with *Death* it ſelf by St. *Peter*; *Either* of them an *Inſtance* terrible enough of *that Power* and *Authority* which Chriſt, the Head of His *Church*, had given to the (*then*) *Rulers* and *Governors* of it, of *puniſhing* and *chaſtiſing* Her *undutifull* and *incorrigible Children*, and of *revenging upon them all their diſobedience*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks to theſe his *Corinthians*, 2. Cor. 10. 6.

Beſides *both which* we have an Example of the Uſe of the *Virga Apoſtolica* in *another* no leſs dreadfull manner, 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. where *Hymenæus* and *Alexander* having *firſt put away a good Conſcience, and at laſt made Shipwrack of their Faith too*, (as nothing is more ordinary or natural than for ſuch as are looſe and careleſs in their *Practice* to fall into *Errors in Judgment*, and to be given up to *believe lies*) are by the Apoſtle *deliver'd unto Satan, that they might learn not to blaſpheme.*

And this, I ſay, is *another moſt terrible manner*, wherein the Apoſtles *might*, and upon occaſion *did* puniſh *Stubborn* and *refractory* Sinners; to ſee whether the *Devil* could not torment them into *better Manners*; and

and to *force* them, if poſſible, to *Repentance* and *Reformation of life.*

For that That was the End of *delivering over Perſons to Satan*, viz. *the deſtruction of the fleſh, that the Spirit might be ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus*, we read *ch.* 5. of *this Epiſtle* v. 5. And it being uſual with God Almighty, in the earlier days of the Goſpel, to give *Satan* leave to ſeize the bodies of ſuch as were for their obſtinate perſeverance in Sin cut off from the *Communion* of the *Church*, (*Who*, (glad of the opportunity) was wont to plague them with *diſeaſes*, and to bring divers *maladies* upon them) *Excommunication* is therefore called a *delivering unto Satan*, the *power* of doing *which* you have heard, the *Apoſtles had*, yea and did not ſpare, when Occaſion ſo requir'd, to *exerciſe* and *make Uſe* of *the ſame.*

And *this* is That which, I preſume, the *Apoſtle* intends in this His threatning of theſe delinquent *Corinthians* in my Text; wherein He gives them to underſtand that in caſe He heard not of a *ſpeedy amendment*, they muſt not expect to be *dallied* with, or to eſcape with a *ſlight* and *eaſie* Penance, but that

that He would ſoon come in Perſon among them, and proceed, *according to the Power the Lord had given Him*, to *this* moſt ſevere Eccleſiaſtical Cenſure upon them.

And indeed had the *Apoſtle* been *deſtitute* of *this Power*, and could not have animadverted *in this manner as has been ſaid* on the more *bold* and *hardned* tranſgreſſors, there being at that time no *Chriſtian* Magiſtrates, and conſequently the *Civil* Power not of His Side; ſo little would He have been able to have gone through the *Work* He had undertaken, *the propagating the Religion of His Lord*, that He could never have vindicated it from *Contempt*, much leſs have conciliated any *tolerable reſpect* either to Himſelf or It, but People would have contumaciouſly deſpis'd *His Sentences* and *Determinations*, and have made a mock of violating, and trampling upon the Laws of His *New Religion*.

Whereas, when They perceiv'd Him arm'd with a *Power* of exerciſing ſuch a *Diſcipline* upon them, as was follow'd with ſuch *ſtrange* and *frightfull* effects, *great fear fell upon all the Church*, as 'tis ſaid in reference to that dreadfull Caſe of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, nay,

Acts 5. 11.

as

as many as but *heard of those things* were mightily influenced thereby, they were *awed* into *Compliance*, and *Obedience* to Him, and *durst* not any longer *oppose* or *withstand* Him.

And this shall suffice to have been spoken as to the *Power* of the *Apostle*, which He here terms His *Rod*, and to the *Nature*, *Necessity*, and *Efficacy*, thereof in the *Infancy*, and *Nonage* of the *Church*.

2. My next Enquiry must be *in what Measures, and Degrees this Apostolical Power is continued to the Bishops, and Governors of the Church now.*

The true Oecumenical *Bishop*, and *good Shepherd* of Souls, though at first He sent forth His Apostles like *Sheep among Wolves*, as Himself Speaks, yet he engaged they should never be *utterly worried*, and *destroy'd* by them; But admit, when *they* had served Him in their generations, they *might*, (as most of them afterwards *did*) Suffer violent deaths in their *own persons*; they should still survive in their * *Successors*, and their *Order* should be perpetuated from age to age, according to the import of the promise of *His being with*

Matt. 10. 16.

* *Quia Apostoli à mundo recesserunt, tribes pro illis Episcopos filios.* S. Hieronymus in Ps. 44. ver. 15.

with them alway ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος *Matt.* 28. *ult.* (which is rightly translated *even unto the End of the World*, as the *same phraſe* does likewiſe *ſignify*, chap. 13. 39. Where our Saviour explaining to His Diſciples the parable of the *Sower*, tells them by *Harveſt* is to be underſtood συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος *The end of the World.*)

But ſtill that the *Succeſſors* of the *Apoſtles* now-adays *have*, in all reſpects, that *Plenitude of Power* continued to *them*, which the *Apoſtles* themſelves at firſt enjoy'd, or that it is at all neceſſary they *ſhould have*, I by no means affirm.

For ſuch was the State of the *Church* in the *Apoſtles* time, as required an *extraordinary effuſion* of the gifts of the Spirit, and could not be manag'd without ſuch a Divine, and Supernatural Aſſiſtance as, God be thank'd, there is in our time no *neceſſity* of; The righteous and mercifull Lord having long ſince made good His gracious promiſes to it, *that* Iſa. 49 23. *Kings ſhould become the Nurſing Fathers, and Queens the Nurſing Mothers of it.*

Whereas 'twas ordinary with the *Apoſtles*, where ever *they* came to publiſh the tidings of

of the Gospel, to meet with *discouragements*, and *oppositions, and to be brought before Rulers for speaking in the name of Jesus*; Whole *Nations*, and *Countries* have *now* espous'd *His Religion*, and the Profession of it is not only tolerated and allow'd, but strictly commanded, and enjoyn'd even by the laws, and constitutions of *Kingdoms*.

What need therefore is there *now* of those *Supernatural* and *miraculous Gifts*, and *Powers* that were confer'd upon the *Apostles*?

The difficult task of gaining *admittance* of *Christianity* into the World is long since *over*; The Miracles that were *formerly* wrought are sufficient Credentials for the Truth of that Message the *present* Ministers of the Gospel deliver, and the Laws of their Countrey protect them in the *due* and *regular* discharge of their Office; The *Kings* of the Earth having not only *embrac'd*, and *submitted* themselves to the *Faith* of *Christ*, but glorying in the Style, and Character of being the *Defenders* of it.

As therefore *de facto* there *is* not; so neither is it *needfull* there *should* be a *Continuation* of those *antient* branches of the *Apostles*

 Power,

Power, whereby they were enabled to work *Miracles*, *some* of Kindneſs, and *some* of Severity, and by *Both* to confirm and eſtabliſh the *Favourers*, and to ſilence, and confound the *Oppoſers* of, (their till then unheard of) Doctrine.

'Tis *ſufficient* that there is *ſuch a ſtanding* and *perpetual* Part of *that Power* tranſmitted, and to be tranſmitted to their *lateſt Succeſſors*, as qualifies them for the exerciſing ſuch a Diſcipline, and Government in the *Church*, as Her preſent *adult* and *grown* Eſtate can *ordinarily require*.

And *ſuch* we are *aſſur'd*, and *thankfull* too that there is. And not only *Hereticks*, and *Schiſmaticks*, but all ſuch Perſons as are *impudently diſſolute*, and *immoral in their lives*, may know, that though *miraculous inflictions* are ceas'd, there are ſtill *Penances*, and *Excommunications* to be made uſe of againſt them.

And *Theſe*! how mightily were they *rever'd*, and how awfully *regarded* by the *Primitive*, and *Purer* Ages of *Chriſtianity*?

'Twas *then* reputed a Sentence *terrible* enough to be excluded from the *Publick Ordinances*; To be debar'd the *Church-Prayers*, and

and *Sacraments*, and baniſhed from the *Communion* of their *Brethren* impreſs'd upon the minds of Men the moſt *ſad*, and *diſmal* Reflections, and even ſwallow'd them up with Horror, and Aſtoniſhment.

Such was the Anguiſh of Soul that ſeiz'd thoſe Criminals that lay under the *Sentence* and *Cenſure* of the *Church*, that the methods of *Prayers*, *Sighs*, and *Tears* were willingly undertaken by them in order to the recovery of *Her Favour*.

And Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory informs us that even *Theodoſius* the Emperor being excommunicated by St. *Ambroſe*, teſtified the *inward* trouble and concern of His Mind, by all the *outward* expreſſions of Grief, and Sorrow; He diſrob'd Himſelf of His *Imperial Purple*, and put on the *Garments of Mourning*; yea for the Space of *Eight Months* together He humbled Himſelf in His *penitential Weeds*, and took ſhame to Himſelf for the foulneſs of His Crime, *The giving way to the Shedding of a great deal of innocent Blood*; and *at laſt* eſteemed it an *ineſtimable Privilege* to be again admitted into the Church of *Milan*.

Thus *ſacred*, and that long after the *Apoſtles*

ſtles time, (this paſſage happening towards the latter End of the *fourth Century*) was the Churche's *Authority*; and ſo greatly reverenced was Her *Diſcipline*, by all Orders, and Degrees of Men.

Nor is *That* which She *now* brandiſhes a *Brutum Fulmen*, Her hand is not *now* ſo ſhortned, but that She can upon juſt Provocation Stretch it forth *ſtill*, to Strike as *hard*, and correct as *ſharply* as *then*.

When Her Head and Founder firſt incorporated Her into a *Community*, He veſted Her with *Power*, (as all other Communities *are*, and *muſt* be that are deſign'd *long to ſubſiſt*) and promis'd She ſhould *for ever* retain a ſhare of it, *ſufficient* for the puniſhing ſuch *Members of Her Society*, as ſhould, at any time, *preſumptuouſly* violate the Laws, and Conſtitutions of it.

And to *this Power* have the Eccleſiaſtical Superintendents, and Governors, *all along*, (when *need* has ſo requir'd) not Stuck to have *recourſe*; Rather than not maintain the *Churche's Purity*, and *Peace*, They have *ever* ſmartly *chaſtis'd* that Vice, and Wickedneſs that has eclips'd, and defac'd the *One*, and thoſe

thoſe *Diviſions*, and Diſorders that have diſturb'd, and endanger'd the *Other*.

And if (as it may poſſibly be *urg'd* that) Perſons now-adays *deſpiſe theſe Chaſtiſements*, *regard* not *Church-Cenſures*, and *are* not ſo *afraid of them*, nor *awed by them* as *formerly*; It ſhall ſuffice me to reply, That a Man's *ſtupid inſenſibility* (in many caſes) argues his condition not to be the *better*, but the *worſe*; They are but ſo much the more worthy of *Blame*, I will add, and *Pity* too; In a word, I look upon *this Practice* of theirs, as one Inſtance of that wofull Degeneracy of *the laſt days*, wherein the *Apoſtle* long ſince *foretold* us, that Men ſhould not only be *diſobedient*, *unthankfull*, and *unholy*; But *proud*, *fierce*, and *heady*. 2 Tim. 3. 2, 3, 4.

And thus I diſmiſs the ſecond Thing, *viz.* That the Biſhops, and Governors of the Church *now* have the *Power of the Rod* continued to *them* in a meaſure *ſufficient*, *pro hoc ſtatu*; though not ſo *large* and *full* as their *firſt Predeceſſors* had. And yet, of the *two*, no doubt, They had *rather*, after St. *Paul's* example (which is my third Particular,)

3. *Have occaſion to uſe only the fair, and gentle*

gentle Methods; This the Apoſtle's *manner of Expreſſion* in my Text, *What will ye? Shall I come?* &c. intimates *Him* to have been moſt deſirous of; The putting the *queſtion* to the *Corinthians*, as He does, being in effect a *telling* them, it ſhould be purely *their own fault*, *if* He came unto them with a *Rod*, and not in *Love*, and in the *Spirit of Meekneſs*.

He well remember'd, 'twas the Service of *the Prince of Peace* that he was engag'd in, *viz. The divulging the Goſpel of Peace*, (Bringing Men over, *at firſt*, to the *Profeſſion*, and *then* preſerving them in the *Practice* of it,) and he *accordingly attempted* to do it in the moſt *meek*, and *peaceable* manner.

Had He delighted in *Severity*, or been fond of making Uſe of *His Power*, He would never have troubled Himſelf to have given the Offenders ſuch fair warning to *prevent*, and *eſcape* it, by a timely Amendment, and Reformation of life. His thus *premoniſhing* them of the *Tendency* of their preſent doings, whilſt 'twas yet in their power to *evade* it, argued great *tenderneſs*, and *indulgence*, yea a truly *Paternal kindneſs* towards them. The affection of a *Father* prompting Him to *menace*

nace, and *threaten* Punishment, to the very End, that He might *not execute*, and *inflict* it. Suitable to what He has, 2 *Cor.* 13. 10. Therefore, *I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness*; "For "*this reason* I give you these *wholesome warnings* before I come, that when I come, I "may not have occasion to proceed to *excision* and *excommunication*, as against *contumacious Offenders* I must *of necessity* do.

Thus truly *Christian*, and exactly resembling *that* of the *meek*, and *lowly Jesus*, was the Temper of our *Apostle*; He was very loth to be *harsh* and *rigorous*, if His Business might be effected without it; * and willing not only to *respite*, and *suspend*, but wholly to *withhold* the Punishments due to *Evil-doers*, in case He could by any *milder* way attain His Ends on them; Provided they would but be reclaim'd by *kindness*, and won upon by *candid Usage*.

* *Ille dolet, quotiens cogitur esse ferox.*

'Twas in his opinion a more *noble* and *manly* way of victory to conquer Mens *wills*, and captivate their *understandings*, than to use *force* and *violence* upon their *Persons*. But still He was not so *cruelly complaisant* neither,

as not to put a Rub in the way of Him that He saw posting to his *ruine*; or to suffer impenitent Sinners to *damn* themselves without *Check*.

No, in that case He took His *Rod* in hand out of meer *Pity*; *chastening* them therewith as an Argument of His *Love*, & *scourging* them to shew His *Compassion* *.

* Ὅτι διὰ τὴν μακροθυμίας τῶν ὑβριζομένων οὐ φείσεται διόρθωσις· τότε ἡ ἀποτομία τὴν μακροθυμίας τοῖς ἀδιορθώτοις ἐστὶ χρησιμωτέρα.
Scriptor Responsionum ad Orthodoxos.

The *Church* is in Scripture not unfitly resembled to a *Vineyard*, (as *Isa.* 5. and elsewhere) and that upon *several* accounts, but *none* more aptly than *this*; That even the *noble Vine* (as the Prophet *Jeremy*'s Epithet is) is wont to have its *luxuriances*, and *excrescencies*, which till they be *prun'd away*, and *lop'd off*, it either produces *no fruit*, or else such as never comes to *Maturity*, and *Perfection*. And *accordingly* in the *Church*; there are *those* that have *embraced*, at least that make daily *profession* of *the Faith of Christ*; *those* that have been baptized into the *best Religion* in the World, and are yet guilty of such notorious *exorbitances*, and *irregularities* in their lives, as the Masters in God's *Spiritual Husbandry*, the *Bishops* and *Pastors* of

Jer. 2. 21

of His *Church* muſt be forced to *reclaim* and *rectifie* by the *Diſcipline* of their *Cenſures*, or there will never be any *Good* to be expected from them. Rather, they will turn at laſt, (to keep to the Prophet's *Allegory*) to *degenerate plants of a ſtrange Vine*, and become utterly *unprofitable branches*, fit only to be *caſt forth till they wither*, and *then to be gathered, and caſt into the fire, and burned.* Joh. 15. 6.

Thus you ſee the *Paſtors* and *Governors* of the *Church* are of neceſſity *compell'd* ſometimes to *uſe ſharpneſs*; And unleſs They *could be* (as their near Relation will not *ſuffer* them) wholly *indifferent* to the *Welfare* of thoſe under their *Care*, They *muſt*, *in ſome caſes*, do it, though with never ſo much *reluctance*.

Nay, the *welfare* of thoſe who are *actually delinquent* is not concern'd *alone* neither, but there is infinite danger leſt *their* Countenance and Example ſhould inveigle *others*, and draw *them* at laſt into the ſame Miſery and Perdition with *themſelves*. And theſe are *Conſequences* ſo *ſad*, and *miſchievous*, as that they muſt be prevented by any *lawfull* means, though haply *ſuch* as may Prove *harſh* and *cutting*; And yet *Cuncta prius ten-*

tanda be ſtill the Churche's Motto in the caſe; For *this* hinders not, but rather proves and confirms (according to what I am now aſſerting) the *Apoſtolick* temper *naturally* to *incline* to *Chriſtian tenderneſs*, and *pity*.

And ſo much for the third Thing, That albeit the *Apoſtle* was furniſh'd with *Power* ſufficient to *puniſh* all Stubborn Offenders in the *Church*, yet He was very *loth*, and *unwilling* to exerciſe and make uſe of it, but in caſe of pure *neceſſity*, being much rather deſirous He might have occaſion to uſe only the *fair*, and *gentle* means.

4. And ſo I proceed to the *fourth* and *laſt* Thing propounded, namely, *To exhort Chriſtians to be more obedient to their Spiritual Paſtors, and Fathers, by an orderly and regular converſation, than to force them to the uſe of that Severity, which They are of themſelves averſe from.*

And *here* methinks there ſhould nothing *More* be needfull to prevail with Men to yield a hearty, and willing *Obedience to thoſe that are over them in the Lord*, than a Conſideration, what Their *Office* and *Employ* is, which is in Scripture term'd, *a Watching for Mens Souls.* An

An *Office* above all others ſo vaſtly *beneficial* to the World, that 'twere to be expected, *Meer Gratitude* ſhould put Men upon endeavouring to render it as *ſweet*, and *eaſie* as poſſible to Them that *Suſtain* it; *And Kindneſs to themſelves* oblige *them* to be *ſubmiſſive and obedient to it.*

This the *Apoſtle* thought a *good Argument* for Chriſtians *to obey them that have the rule over them*, even *their watching for their Souls*; And *ſuch* moſt certainly would it appear, were it but *conſider'd* aright. Heb. 13. 17.

For can Men *reaſonably ſuſpect* that *They* whoſe *aims* and *deſigns* are ſo infinitely *kind*, and *charitable* towards them, ſhould require any thing of them that is really *hurtfull* and *prejudicial* to them? Can they *be jealous* of *enmity* from *Them*, whoſe conſtant endeavour it is to *befriend* them, and that in the moſt *important inſtance of* Friendſhip? Laſtly, Can *they juſtly fear* any *Harm* from Thoſe, whoſe daily *task*, and *buſineſs* it is to doe all the *Good* they can to as many as are *committed to their Charge*, Yea, I may add, who *dare not but do it*, being, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *to give account?*

And

And yet 'twould be a matter of great *wonder*, did not the *commonneſs* abate it, that the *wholeſome* and *profitable*, the *grave* and *wiſe*, the *kind* and *friendly* Advices of their *Eccleſiaſtical Superiors* ſhould be ſo *ſlightly regarded*, and not more *readily complied with* by them than they are; That there ſhould be thoſe among us who *being told* by Them of their *Duty* never ſo plainly, continue to *neglect* it; that being *premoniſh'd* never ſo *fairly* refuſe to *take warning*, till *like Children*, I mean not in *meekneſs*, *innocence*, and *ſimplicity*, (they are far enough from that) but in *croſſneſs*, and *ſtubbornneſs*, they are *whip'd* into *Obedience*.

Though their *Spiritual Guides*, as they are *the Ambaſſadors of Chriſt*, would *rather* beſeech, intreat, and *pray them*, as St. *Paul* ſpeaks, *in Chriſt's ſtead, that they would be reconcil'd to God*, than come as *His Heralds* to *proclaim War*, and *denounce Vengeance againſt them*; Though as *Paranymphs* of the *Heavenly Bridegroom*, they had rather *court* and *perſwade* His *wandring* and *inconſtant Spouſe* to return to His *Love*, and re-admit His dear *Embraces*, (if by that means they might *prevail* with Her) than

2 Cor. 5. 20.

than *threaten* Her with an *Eternal Divorce*; Yet, howſoever it comes to paſs, the *latter* methods are they fain, for the moſt part, to have *recourſe* to. So madly do Men *flee* their *Happineſs*, and *forſake their own Mercies*. Jonah 2.8.

Nay with *ſome*, Experience abundantly teaches that even *Theſe*, (I mean the *ſharpeſt courſes*) loſe their *Effect*; *They* being ſo far from *trembling at* (as was *uſual heretofore*) that they *ſlight*, and *contemn* the *ſevereſt Sentences*, and *Denunciations* of the *Church*.

But all I have, at preſent, to ſay to *ſuch*, is to deſire them to recollect the *Proverb*, and to conſider well the *Meaning* of it, *That what they ſpit againſt Heaven will fall in their face*; That the time will come, when the great *Biſhop of Souls* will interpret Mens *deſpiſing* of thoſe that were commiſſionated *under Him, as a deſpiſing of Himſelf*; And *ſurely* they will not be ſo fool-hardy as to *diſregard*, and *piſh at* the diſmal conſequences of *that* too. Surely, they will for the *future*, *quietly*, and *dutifully* ſubmit themſelves to their *Spiritual Governors*; and if not be drawn by the *Cords of love alone* to obey *their orders*, and reverence *their injunctions*; at leaſt Luk. 10. 16.

not

not contumaciouſly *oppoſe themſelves*, and ſtand out againſt *their Authority*, leſt haply, as was ſaid in another caſe, *they be hereafter found to have fought againſt God.* Act. 5 39.

I ſhall conclude all with one word to You, *my Brethren in the Sacred Function*, and it ſhall be by way of *entreaty*, That foraſmuch as we are commanded *in all things to ſhew our ſelves Patterns of good works*; and *Enſamples to our Flocks*, We may be carefull (as certainly we have *as much reaſon (to ſay no more)* as any *Clergy* in the Kingdom) to approve our ſelves *ſuch* in *this particular reſpect*, I mean, *In humbly and chearfully complying* with, *and ſubmitting our ſelves* to *all the Injunctions of our Reverend Dioceſan.*

And let us earneſtly implore *the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlaſting Covenant, to make both us*, and all that we have the inſpection over, *perfect in every good work, to do His Will, and to work in us all whatſoever is well pleaſing in His ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt, to whom be Glory for ever, and ever.* Amen. Heb. 13. 20, 21.

FINIS.